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THE
ORIGIN
OF
WILL O' THE WISP

By

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ILLUSTRATED

BY

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THE ORIGIN OF WILL O' THE WISP.

I.



THE GOD OF LOVE, long years ago
When Time himself was young,
Set out with quiver, darts and bow
Across his shoulders slung.

II.

'Twas morn ; Aurora's blandest smile
Beamed on him from above.
Away he flew, mile after mile,
Uniting hearts in love.

III.

Birds warbled softest melodies ;
Sweet flowers decked the ground,
Exhaling odors on the breeze
To soothe love's burning wound.



WAY HE FLEW MIBB AFTER MIBB
USITING HEARTS IN LOVE

IV.

For love pervaded all the air
 As gleamed this hunter's flame ;
His aim was true ; his silken snare
 O'erflowed with joyous game.

V.

Constant success, in young or old,
 Engenders blind conceit ;
And gods, like mortals, grown too bold
 Will sometimes know defeat.

VI.

Lo ! dawned upon the archer's sight
 Beauty in virgin pride ;
His keenest arrow sped its flight,
 It glanced and turned aside.

VII.

Amazement chained the hunter-boy ;
For ne'er in earthly guise
Had vision sweet—so bright, so coy—
Dazed this young rover's eyes.

VIII.

Her orbs the midnight stars eclipse ;
Her teeth outrival snow ;
Her mocking, coral, dewy lips
Are arched like Cupid's bow.

IX.

The locks through which her shoulders gleam
Wave there like golden floss ;
Her voice is soft as sylvan stream
Impelled o'er tufts of moss.

X.

With charming grace and visage blest ;
Lithe form unmatched by art ;
Alas ! that such a lovely breast
Contains an icy heart.

XI.

The lamp which gives the purest light
Decoys the moth to death :
That dainty flower* of purest white
Allures with poison breath.

XII.

Pertly she says : “Thy power I scout !
Thou prankish imp of mirth ;
I challenge thee ! for much I doubt
Thy boasted heavenly birth.

* *The Andromeda Marina*.—Stagger Bush.

XIII.

“Sweet little fool! go chant love’s strain
To softer hearts than mine!
I’ll wear no chain of love-sick swain
Nor in his arms recline.

XIV.

“For me, thou shalt not choose a mate!
I scorn love’s soft appeal!
Thy shafts can never penetrate
My armor strong as steel!

XV.

“For others keep thy silly darts
Who sigh to fall thy prey!
Learn, tiny god!—men’s loving hearts
Are toys with which I play!”



"FOR OTHERS KEEP THY SILLY DARTS
WHO SIGH TO FALL THY PREY!"

XVI.

Abashed, the baffled, pouting child
Departs in scornful woe,
And seeks repose within the wild,
Where limpid streamlets flow.

XVII.

He finds a rill 'neath lindens tall,—
Fit place for gods to rest ;
Refulgent beams across it fall
From out the gorgeous west.

XVIII.

He casts his bow and darts aside ;
His wings he deftly trims ;
Then plunges in the purling tide
To cool his dimpled limbs.

XIX.

Unknown to him, the saucy lass
Discovers his retreat—
Purloins his arms from off the grass,
And flees with nimble feet.

XX.

Ah! fugitive! as you in grace
Trip blithely o'er the strand,
You little reck your feet but trace
Your doom upon the sand.

XXI.

A butterfly with splendid wings,
Flies swiftly down the glade—
Ideal of all lovely things
Imploring Cupid's aid.



UNKNOWN TO HIM THE SAUCY LASS
DISCOVERS HIS RETREAT

XXII.

“Yes! Little One! I grant thy plea,
Thou shalt not vainly sue;
The nectar-cup that blooms for thee
Distils enough for two.”

XXIII.

How gleefully he cleaves the tide!
His pretty cheeks aglow,
Then flings the pearly drops aside,
And springs to grasp his bow.

XXIV.

He looks around in wild despair,
For bow and darts have fled,
His voice in anger rends the air
As if to rouse the dead.

XXV.

His outcries waken deep defiles ;
His Clan springs through the green.
Meanwhile, the witching damsel smiles
Behind her leafy screen.

XXVI.

Thus, many laugh when they should weep,
And love, where they should hate,
Or rest in dreams of blissful sleep
Beneath the sword of fate.

XXVII.

“ Ho ! Comrades all ! heed my commands !
Find where our thief has fled !
My arrows hurled by other hands
Will consternation spread !



HO! COMRADES ALL! HEED MY COMMANDS!
FIND WHERE OUR THIEF HAS HIED!

XXVIII.

“The queenly Rose, how would it grow
If anchored in the lake?
Forget-me-nots, how would they blow
Engrafted on the brake?”

XXIX.

“Away! And hunt with main and might!
List ye to every sound!
And search for steps however light
Upon the yielding ground!”

XXX.

They scan each leaf and mottled tint
Where shine and shadows meet,
And quickly see each tiny dint
Where flew this coquette's feet.

XXXI.

They follow where those imprints wind
Along the curving shore ;
The fleeing pilferer they find—
The hot pursuit is o'er.

XXXII.

Cupid in scathing tones : “Strange foe !
Think'st thou with me to jest ?
Ne'er more for thee shall passions glow
In any manly breast !

XXXIII.

“For thy fell crime, inhuman Sprite !
Hear thou my stern decree !
Go roam the earth a fickle light
Through all eternity !

XXXIV.

“ When stilly night, lone, dread, profound,
Unfurls her sable pall,
Through grave-yards flit from mound to mound,
Condemned and shunned by all !

XXXV.

“ O'er lonely marshes doomed to glide
Till night is merged in day,
Thy lovely face then shalt thou hide
In tombs with mortal clay !

XXXVI.

“ O'er dreary moorlands thou shalt dart !
Past wildernesses skirt,
Seeking in vain some loyal heart.
Away ! thou wretched flirt ! ”



FOR THY FELL CRIME INHUMAN SPIRIT
HEAR THOU MY STERN DECREE!

XXXVII.

“Relent! relent!” she pleads in woe,
“Behold mine eyes with tears o’erflow!
Have mercy! I implore!
Release me from this endless fate!
Give me some task, however great,
I’ll serve thee evermore.

XXXVIII.

“While toying with thine arms, by chance,
I pierced me with thy cruel lance,
Ah, heal this mad’ning sting!”
“No! thou shalt bear through endless time
This pain! The curse of thy deep crime
To thee must ever cling!

XXXIX.

“The greatest crime of all on earth,
Is scorning love in heartless mirth,
For this thou art convicted.
I will not grant thy wild appeal!
I will not cause thy wound to heal
In wanton sport inflicted.”

XL.

“If I can never know the charms,
Of being clasped in loving arms,
Pillowed on Love's dear breast;
If in love-smiles I may not bask,
Then let me die! 'tis all I ask—
To die and be at rest.”

XLI.

“Know! pleading maid, thy charming face,
Effects no change in thy disgrace,
Thy beauty I defy!
For when mine arms were filched by thee
That theft meant immortality,
And thou shalt never die!”

XLII.

“Let me not ever wander o'er
Dank, dreary grave-yards, marsh and moor,
Each night unloved, alone!
Nor through each sweet sunshiny day,
When all the world with joy is gay,
Hide in dank tombs to moan!

XLIII.

“Ah ! let me chant thy wondrous praise,
Through moon-light nights and sunny days
 With every thankful breath !
I shudder at the ghastly nights,
I fear the tomb, I loath its sights,
 I dare not dwell with death !

XLIV.

“For thee I'll find the fairest bowers,
To thee will bring the sweetest flowers,
 And sing thee to repose ;
I'll be thy slave for aye, through all.
Forgive ! forgive me and recall
 Thy curse of endless woes !

XLV.

“Oh ! I'll disperse the clouds, the storm,
Bring gems to deck thy lovely form
From heaven's galaxy !
For thee, deep caves will I explore,
Through azure depths for thee will soar,
If thou wilt set me free !”

XLVI.

“Enough !” the archer-boy replies,
With anger in his voice and eyes,
“Behold how gods can jest !
I take thy vow ! glib boaster fair,
Do these slight tasks, I'll grant thy prayer,
Lo ! this is my behest :—

XLVII.

“ Paint a song upon the rainbow ;
Mend a broken bubble ;
Make the desert overflow,
The ocean cease its trouble.

XLVIII.

“ Count the countless stars in motion ;
Hush the wind's deep sighing ;
Count the countless pearls of ocean ;
Stop the clouds from flying.

XLIX.

“ Chain the lightning ere it flashes ;
Still the pealing thunder ;
Stop the avalanche that dashes
Mounts of ice asunder.

L.

“Out of starlight make an earthquake
Where the storm-god lowers ;
Out of fire forge a snowflake ;
Wreath the moon with flowers.

LI.

“Seize the glory of the morning,
With it bind thy tresses ;
Dim the sky the sun's adorning
With his last caresses.

LII.

“Hapless outcast ! jilt of earth,
Doubting my celestial birth !
When these mandates are obeyed
I'll forgive thee, pleading maid.”



WHEN WINDY NIGHTS ARE DREAD, PROFOUND
UNFURLED HER SABLE PALM



LIII.

Will o' the Wisp ! of thee we sing,
On earth, in heaven above ;
Thou art of all, the only thing
That findeth nought to love.

LIV.

The oceans, founts and streams would dry
If Love's sweet spell were o'er ;
The sun, the stars, the earth would die
And chaos reign once more.

LV.

The heavens paint upon the seas
Their ev'ry changing hue,
And sweeter sighs the fragrant breeze
When falls the evening dew.

LVI.

Huge mounts peal forth a deep refrain
To clouds contending low ;
Glad offspring of the sun and rain !
Love causes thee to glow.

LVII.

Love binds us all with rosy bands,
Love conquers the perverse !
Love guides us with his dimpled hands,
Love rules the Universe !







